

## Editorial

Readers may notice that issues of *Prometheus* are emerging thick and fast. After no production for nearly a year, we have some catching up to do. We also have some apologizing to do: in our year off line, a substantial backlog of papers accumulated. Their authors have been hugely patient in waiting their turn. In an age when journal publication is the primary indicator of academic performance, delay can be a serious sacrifice. I am immensely grateful to them for their understanding and their support.

This is a very full issue, with all the elements of a proper academic journal. There are research papers, there is a debate, and there are book reviews. The first research paper comes from Sherry Marcellin and Dick Kawooya and deals with copyright reform. *Prometheus* has had much to say about intellectual property rights (IPR) over the years and has done its best to make what can easily be an esoteric discussion between IPR practitioners and public servants relevant and accessible to a much wider audience. And this is basically the argument of the Marcellin and Kawooya paper, that IPR reform is contingent on how IPR problems and their potential solutions are framed.

Lisa Daniel and Jeremy Klein analyse innovation from a range of perspectives. Ultimately, they end up doubting whether innovation can be assumed to create value. They draw on their own empirical work in the Australian biotechnology industry, and find that value creation has been shaped by dynamic social processes involving multiple stakeholders and diverse perspectives of innovation. Bridgette Wessels and no fewer than ten co-authors look at open access to research data. Digital storage means that research data are readily available. This does not mean that data are as readily usable. Data gaps develop as data become detached from published conclusions. The many authors conclude that problems of variability and consistency need to be addressed to ensure that risks surrounding the data gap are managed.

The debate is on the social dynamic of innovation networks, and has been organised by Joanne Roberts, one of our editors and an expert on the subject. Producing a *Prometheus* debate is no mean feat, and was especially challenging over the past year, when we were unable to publish any debate papers at all. Her perseverance has been remarkable and is rewarded by a remarkable debate, focusing on the spatial dimension of learning and innovation. The proposition is put forward by Roel Rutten. He contrasts codified knowledge with tacit knowledge, much harder to communicate. Rutten develops an explanation of the spatial dimension of learning and innovation in which learning is the driver of innovation and – much more contentious – tacit knowledge may not be a very useful concept. The paper suggests that individuals, rather than organizations, are the principal agents of learning and that the socio-spatial context in which individuals are embedded is critical.

Most of the response papers are broadly supportive of Rutten. James Faulconbridge notes that all knowledge has characteristics of both tacit and codified knowledge. However, he has a couple of reservations. Focusing on social context runs the risk of overlooking many of the advances of science and technology. The material dimensions of learning also seem conspicuously absent from Rutten's discussion. Without care, focus on social context can lead to an asymmetrical analysis which neglects the role of things in shaping the geographies of learning. Elena Antonacopoulou is also in general agreement with Rutten, adding to his argument by reminding us that learning is a complex phenomenon. She offers her own (Greek) understanding of learning as place (*choros*) rather than just space (*topos*). The distinction has implications for our perspectives on learning.

Alice Lam follows Rutten in questioning conventional understanding of tacit knowledge. She argues that an individual perspective on learning and innovation must consider the tacitness of knowledge as its conceptual starting point. She is just a little uncomfortable with Rutten's ambiguous definition of the concept of social context and seeks to clarify his embedded agency argument. For Lam, the role of individual mobility in creating and sustaining overlapping social contexts and in driving the socio-spatial dynamics of learning in a global knowledge economy is critical.

Patrick Cohendet considers the main contribution of Rutten's paper to be its rejection of the idea that individuals learn in only one social context at a time. Individuals are part of multiple social contexts and move among them to access and transfer knowledge, a process which probably benefits learning. Cohendet's only objection to the proposition is that the argument is so important that Rutten might have presented it even more forcefully. Marc Bahlmann seeks to extend Rutten's argument and also to question it, if ever so gently. He reflects that there remains an underlying, more fundamental problem that characterizes much of the literature on space and innovation: Just what is the locus of knowledge? If not the organisation, then the individual, but what about the collective?

Bert Sadowski, our book review editor, has put together this issue's book review section and has written a couple of reviews himself. Organising book reviews is uphill work these days. In most areas relevant to *Prometheus*, the institutional rewards for writing journal articles vastly exceed the rewards offered for writing books. In all subjects, writing reviews of these books rarely brings any return in terms of institutional performance measures. Consequently, reviewers – like referees – are hard to find, and many journals have given up publishing book reviews at all. The book review is an art form of peculiar academic importance and *Prometheus* will keep publishing book reviews as long as it possibly can.

Stuart Macdonald  
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